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MIDNIGHT NATION
JOE'S COMICS
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STRACZYNSKI
FRANK
SIBAL
MILLA
DREAMER

midnight nation
created by j. michael straczynski

## "DECISIONS, DECISIONS, DECISIONS."

cover
gary frank
matt milla

**Previously:**
As David and Laurel reach Chicago in their cross country trek, David tries to make contact with his estranged wife. While he is only able to vaguely see her in the room it gives the Walkers an edge. Once they know that she is important to David they kidnap her and threaten to kill her. David must tap into his growing Walker side to reach through the worlds and save her life. Now, Laurel and David must walk even faster to make up for the lost time.


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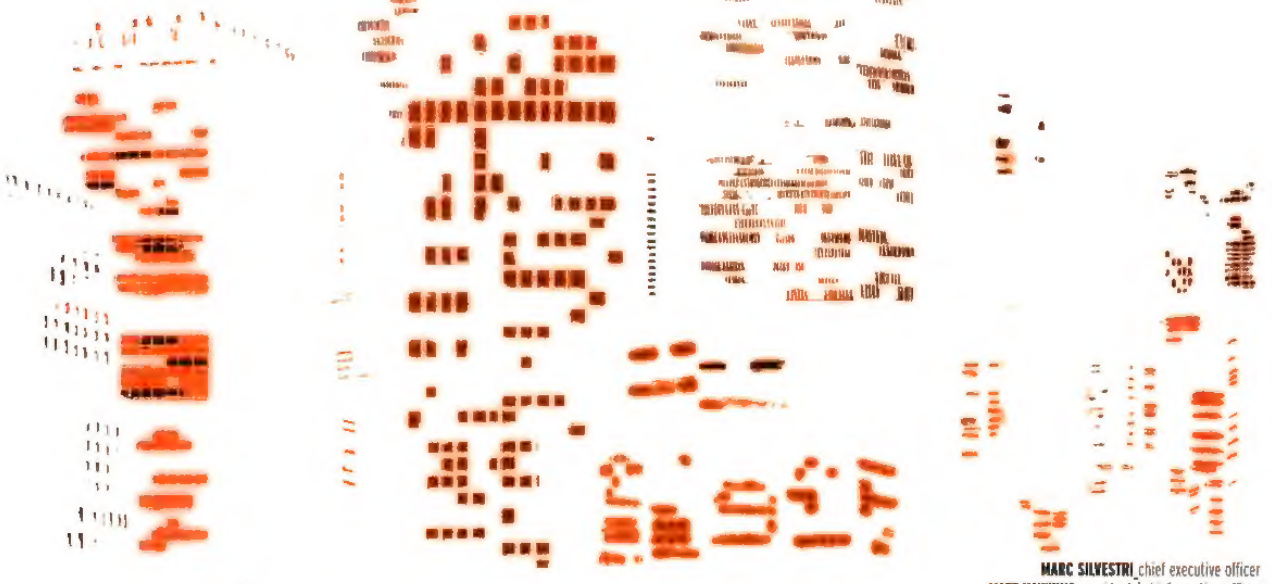


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**MIDNIGHT NATION™ Vol. 1, Issue 7, JUNE 2001. FIRST PRINTING.** Published by Image Comics Inc. Office of Publication: 1071 North Batavia Street Suite A Orange, California 92867. $2.50 US / $3.93 in Canada.


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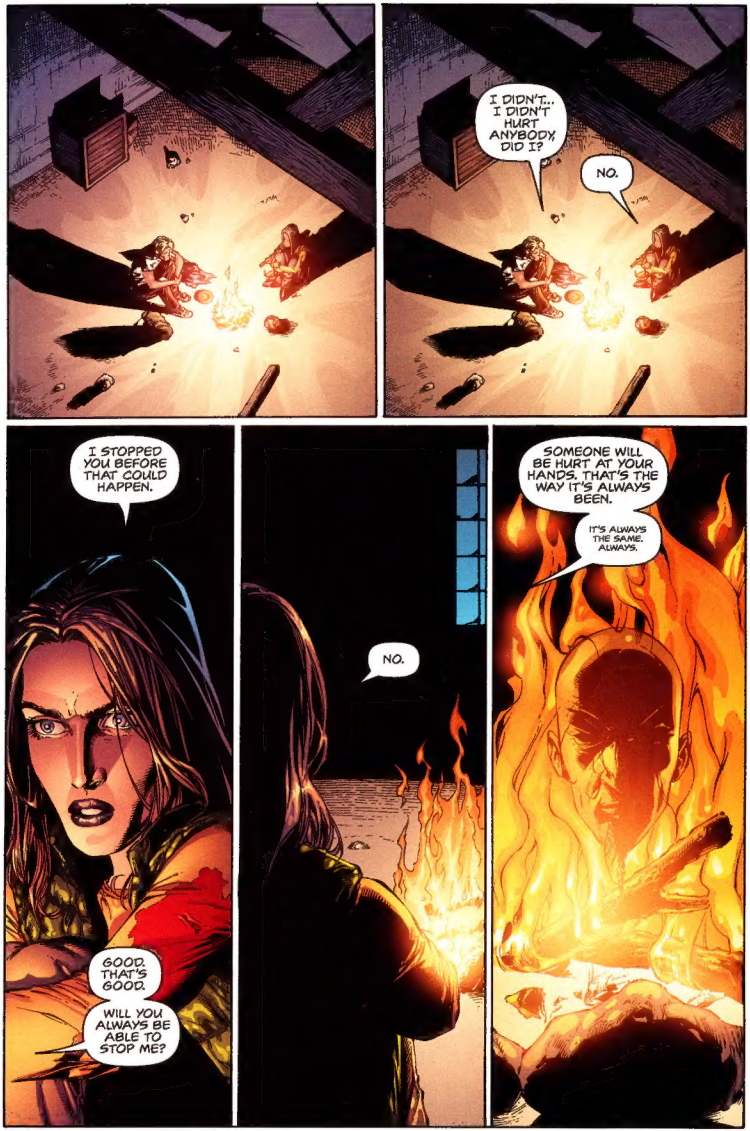
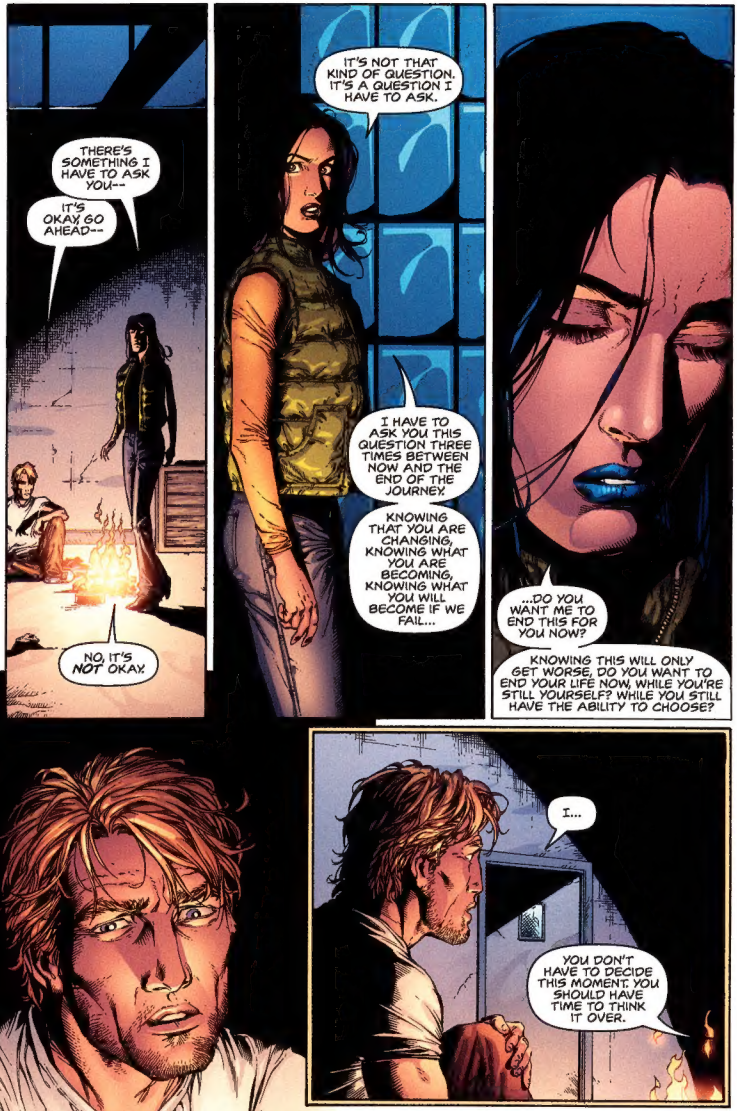
**PRINTED IN CANADA**

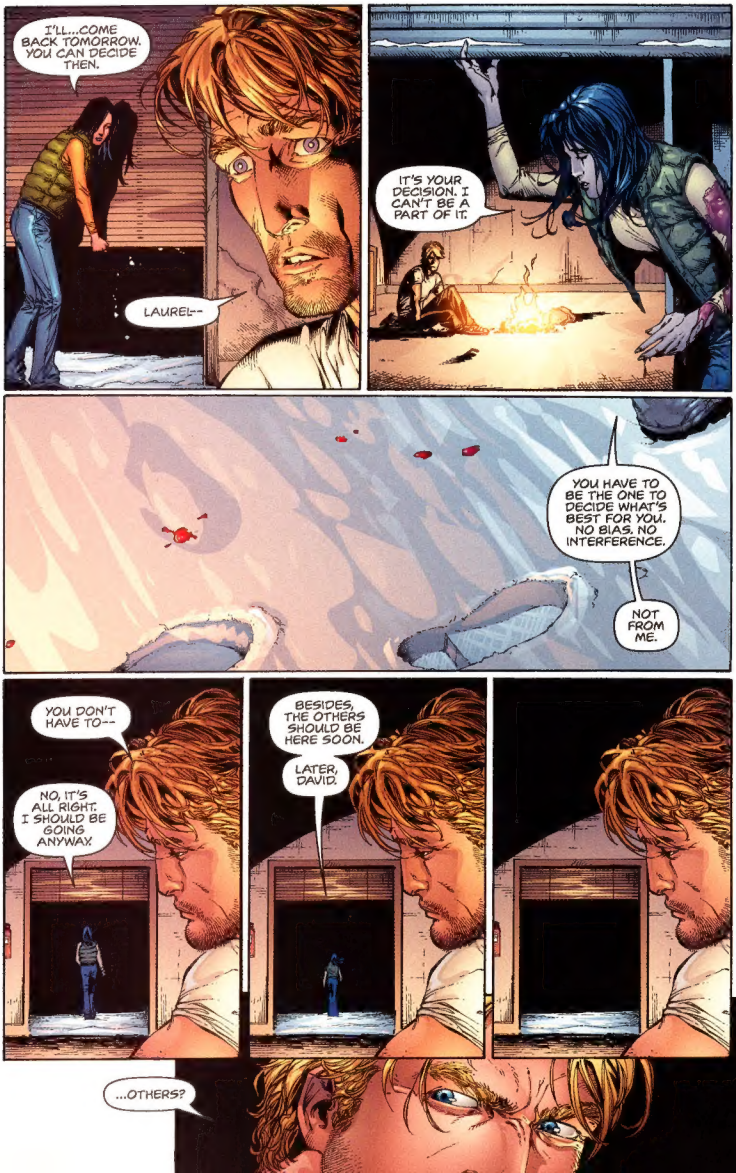
AGAIN THE DREAM COMES, AND I AM FREE. LETHAL. POWERFUL. I CAN REVEL IN IT. SAVOR IT.
BECAUSE AFTER ALL, IT IS ONLY A DREAM.
AAAAAGGGHHH!
AND YET...
AND YET...I FEEL THERE'S SOMETHING TERRIBLY...WRONG...

I'VE GOT HIM! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
SSSSSHHHHAAAA--
--AAAAAHHHH!!
YAAAAAA A--!

UNNF!
LAU-RELLL? LAU--
LAUREL? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU--
I--
DID I--
OH.
I GUESS I DID. DIDN'T I?
YEAH. YOU DID.


I DIDN'T.. I DIDN'T HURT ANYBODY, DID I?
NO.
I STOPPED YOU BEFORE THAT COULD HAPPEN.
GOOD. THAT'S GOOD.
WILL YOU ALWAYS BE ABLE TO STOP ME?
NO.
SOMEONE WILL BE HURT AT YOUR HANDS. THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.
IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME. ALWAYS.


THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO ASK YOU--
IT'S OKAY. GO AHEAD--
NO. IT'S NOT OKAY.
IT'S NOT THAT KIND OF QUESTION. IT'S A QUESTION I HAVE TO ASK.
I HAVE TO ASK YOU THIS QUESTION THREE TIMES BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE JOURNEY.
KNOWING THAT YOU ARE CHANGING, KNOWING WHAT YOU ARE BECOMING, KNOWING WHAT YOU WILL BECOME IF WE FAIL...
...DO YOU WANT ME TO END THIS FOR YOU NOW?
KNOWING THIS WILL ONLY GET WORSE, DO YOU WANT TO END YOUR LIFE NOW, WHILE YOU'RE STILL YOURSELF? WHILE YOU STILL HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE?
I...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DECIDE THIS MOMENT; YOU SHOULD HAVE TIME TO THINK IT OVER.


I'LL...COME BACK TOMORROW. YOU CAN DECIDE THEN.
LAUREL--
IT'S YOUR DECISION. I CAN'T BE A PART OF IT.
YOU HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO DECIDE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU. NO BIAS. NO INTERFERENCE.
NOT FROM ME.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO--
NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT. I SHOULD BE GOING ANYWAY
BESIDES, THE OTHERS SHOULD BE HERE SOON.
LATER, DAVID.
...OTHERS?

...SHIT...

LAUREL...?
SHAH.
SHAH.
SHAH.
OKAY, FINE, YOU GUYS WANT TROUBLE, YOU PICKED THE *RIGHT* TIME AND THE *RIGHT* GUY AND I'M JUST PISSED OFF ENOUGH TO--
WAIT... WHAT'RE YOU--
SHAH?
SHAH--
-- OW..
SHAH... SHAH-SHAH!
SHAH?
SHAH!

SH--
LET ME GUESS: SHAH?
SHAH?! SHAH?!
SHAH... SHAH-SHAH-SHAH-
WHAT'D I... NEVER MIND... JUST BACK OFF, OKAY, BACK--
SHHHHH...
-:CLICK!:-
BZZZZZZTTTTT...
-:CRACKLE:-
-:BZZZZZZZT:-
-:WHEEEEEE-OOWWEE:-
-- OH GOD THE HUMANITY.. A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY..DEUTCHLAND DEUTCHLAND UBER ALLES--
-- HELTER SKELTER...FOUR DEAD AT KENT STATE...HEREBY RESIGN THE PRESIDENCY..THE REVEREND KING WAS SHOT AND KILLED AT--
-:FWWWEEEEEE... OOOOOOOO...:-
SHAH?
SHAH?
...SHAH.

OKAY..UM... WHAT'RE YOU--
HELLO.
WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU. WE ARE HERE TO SAVE YOU.
LISTEN CAREFULLY.
LW
KHz
150
180
210
250
280
EVERYTHING YOU BELIEVE IS A LIE.

DAMN IT...I HATE IT WHEN I CRY...I CAN'T TALK TO YOU LIKE THIS...
LISTEN...I CAN'T DO THIS. I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS. I'M NOT THAT STRONG ANYMORE.

PLEASE...
DON'T ASK ME TO DO THIS AGAIN. I CAN'T. I CAN'T...
UNDERSTAND: SHE WANTS YOU TO DIE.

IT'S EASIER FOR HER IF YOU'RE DEAD. IF YOU DIE NOW. HERE. SHE DOESN'T WANT TO DEAL WITH IT. OR YOU.
WE WANT YOU TO LIVE.
200
240
250
THAT SO?
WE HAVE NEVER ATTACKED YOU. WE HAVE ONLY DEFENDED OURSELVES WHEN YOU ATTACKED US.
IF WE WISHED YOU DEAD, WE COULD KILL YOU.
RIGHT HERE. RIGHT NOW. SIX DAYS AGO. OR SIX MONTHS AGO. YOU HAVE KILLED OR WOUNDED MANY OF US. BUT WE DO NOT WANT YOU DEAD. NONE OF US DO.
WE WANT YOU TO LIVE.
JUST ONE QUESTION, THEN.
WHY?

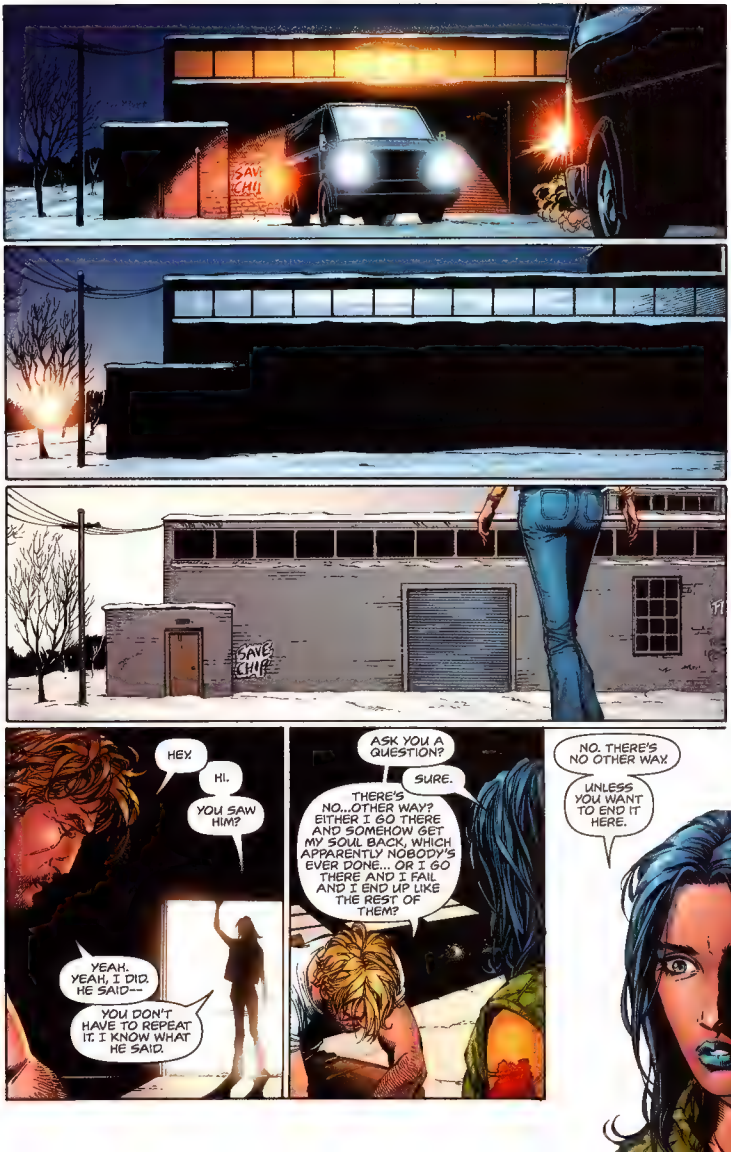
TOUCH THE DIAL. TOUCH THE DIAL AND WE WILL SHOW YOU.
YOU'RE KIDDING ME.
I...YES YEAH, I SUPPOSE SO.
SHE KNEW WE WOULD COME. SHE KNEW YOU WOULD HAVE TO HEAR OUR SIDE. SHE KNEW WE WOULD ASK YOU TO DO THIS. DO YOU TRUST HER?
THEN TOUCH THE DIAL.
IT'S PERFECTLY HARMLESS.
UH, HUH...
WHAT THE HELL....MAY AS WELL GET THIS OVER WITH.
WHAT THE HELL, INDEED.

SO WHAT IS THIS SUPPOSED TO--
-- DO?
...OH, CRAP..
WELCOME HOME.

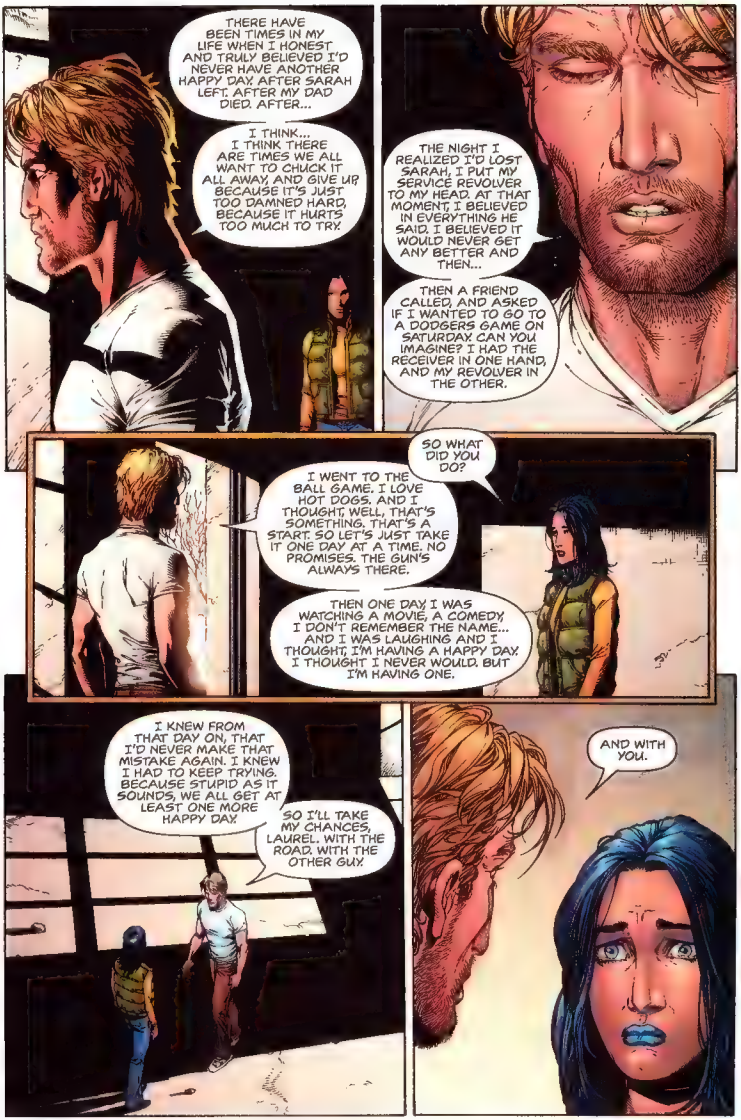
DO YOU LIKE IT?
I MADE IT MYSELF BRICK BY BRICK. YOU'LL GET A BETTER LOOK ONCE YOU GET HERE.
BUT... WE'RE GOING TO NEW YORK, THAT ISN'T--
WHY DO YOU THINK THEY CALL IT THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS?
WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE?
BECAUSE YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND. EACH TIME ONE LIKE YOU HAS COME ACROSS, I CALL THEM HERE TO EXPLAIN THE TRUTH TO THEM.
THE OPPOSITION HATES THAT PART OF IT, BUT THE RULES ARE THE RULES. THEY GET THEIR CHANCE, AND I GET MY CHANCE.
OF COURSE, THEY GET THEIR CHANCE FOR TWELVE MONTHS. I GET MY CHANCE JUST TWICE: NOW, AND... WELL, WHEN YOU ARRIVE.

IS THAT WHY YOU SAID EVERYTHING I KNOW IS A LIE?
NOT JUST ABOUT THIS. ABOUT EVERY-THING. THIS IS THE IMPORTANT PART. SO LISTEN.
LISTEN.
CREATION IS BUILT UPON THE PROMISE OF HOPE, THAT THINGS WILL GET BETTER, THAT TOMORROW WILL BE BETTER THAN THE DAY BEFORE.
BUT IT'S NOT TRUE. CITIES COLLAPSE. POPULATIONS EXPAND. ENVIRONMENTS DECAY. PEOPLE GET RUDER. YOU CAN'T GO TO A MOVIE WITHOUT GETTING IN A FIGHT WITH THE GUY IN THE THIRD ROW WHO WON'T SHUT UP.
FILTHY STREETS. DRIVE-BY SHOOTINGS. IRRADIATED CORN. PERMISSIBLE AMOUNTS OF RAT-DROPPINGS PER HOT DOG. BOMB BLASTS AND BODY COUNTS. TERROR IN THE STREETS, ON CAMERA, IN YOUR LIVING ROOM. AIDS AND EBOLA AND HEPATITIS B AND YOU CAN'T TOUCH ANYONE BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID YOU'LL CATCH SOMETHING BESIDES LOVE AND NOTHING TASTES AS GOOD ANYMORE AND CHRISTOPHER REEVE IS IN A WHEELCHAIR AND LOVE IS STATISTICALLY FALSE.
POCKET NUKES AND SUBWAY ANTHRAX. YOU GROW UP FRUSTRATED, YOU LIVE CONFUSED, YOU AGE FRIGHTENED AND YOU DIE ALONE. SAFE TERRAIN MOVES FROM YOUR CITY TO YOUR BLOCK TO YOUR YARD TO YOUR HOME TO YOUR LIVING ROOM TO THE BEDROOM AND ALL YOU WANT IS TO BE ALLOWED TO LIVE WITHOUT SOMEBODY BREAKING IN TO STEAL YOUR TV AND SHOVE AN ICE-PICK IN YOUR EAR.
THAT SOUND LIKE A BETTER WORLD TO YOU? THAT SOUND TO YOU LIKE A PROMISE KEPT?

THOSE WHO COME TO ME, COME OF THEIR OWN ACCORD BECAUSE THEY COME TO BELIEVE. AS YOU WILL COME TO BELIEVE. WE WILL PROVE THAT THE MAKER OF ALL THINGS IS A LIAR, A FRAUD AND A PRETENDER.
AND THEN WHAT?
I WIN.
AND THEN WHAT?
THERE ARE NO WORDS IN YOUR LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS IT. THE EFFORT ALONE WOULD DESTROY YOU.
BUT IT WILL BE... GLORIOUS.
I CHOSE YOU BECAUSE YOU UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE YOU'VE SEEN. BECAUSE YOU KNOW.
DON'T LET HER KILL YOU. FINISH THE JOURNEY. COME HERE.
COME HOME.
COME HOME.
Kilz


SAVE CHIF
SAVE CHIF
HEY.
HI.
YOU SAW HIM?
YEAH. YEAH, I DID. HE SAID--
YOU DON'T HAVE TO REPEAT IT. I KNOW WHAT HE SAID.
ASK YOU A QUESTION?
SURE.
THERE'S NO...OTHER WAY? EITHER I GO THERE AND SOMEHOW GET MY SOUL BACK, WHICH APPARENTLY NOBODY'S EVER DONE... OR I GO THERE AND I FAIL AND I END UP LIKE THE REST OF THEM?
NO. THERE'S NO OTHER WAY.
UNLESS YOU WANT TO END IT HERE.

THEY WANT ME TO LIVE.
YES.
AND YOU WANT ME--
TO DECIDE.
I CAN MAKE IT PAINLESS.
I'VE DONE IT BEFORE.
I DON'T WANT TO BECOME ONE OF THOSE THINGS, LAUREL. I DON'T CARE WHAT HIS MOTIVES ARE. I DON'T CARE WHAT HIS REASONS ARE. I DON'T WANT TO BE ONE OF THOSE THINGS. I COULDN'T STAND IT.
BUT UNLESS I STOP IT HERE, IT'S ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT'LL HAPPEN.
ALMOST CERTAINLY.
YEAH...WELL, THERE YOU ARE, I GUESS.
THING IS... I MEAN, THE THING OF IT IS...


THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES IN MY LIFE WHEN I HONEST AND TRULY BELIEVED I'D NEVER HAVE ANOTHER HAPPY DAY. AFTER SARAH LEFT. AFTER MY DAD DIED. AFTER...
I THINK... I THINK THERE ARE TIMES WE ALL WANT TO CHUCK IT ALL AWAY, AND GIVE UP BECAUSE IT'S JUST TOO DAMNED HARD, BECAUSE IT HURTS TOO MUCH TO TRY.
THE NIGHT I REALIZED I'D LOST SARAH, I PUT MY SERVICE REVOLVER TO MY HEAD. AT THAT MOMENT, I BELIEVED IN EVERYTHING HE SAID. I BELIEVED IT WOULD NEVER GET ANY BETTER AND THEN...
THEN A FRIEND CALLED, AND ASKED IF I WANTED TO GO TO A DODGERS GAME ON SATURDAY. CAN YOU IMAGINE? I HAD THE RECEIVER IN ONE HAND, AND MY REVOLVER IN THE OTHER.
SO WHAT DID YOU DO?
I WENT TO THE BALL GAME. I LOVE HOT DOGS. AND I THOUGHT, WELL, THAT'S SOMETHING. THAT'S A START. SO LET'S JUST TAKE IT ONE DAY AT A TIME. NO PROMISES. THE GUN'S ALWAYS THERE.
THEN ONE DAY, I WAS WATCHING A MOVIE, A COMEDY, I DON'T REMEMBER THE NAME... AND I WAS LAUGHING AND I THOUGHT, I'M HAVING A HAPPY DAY. I THOUGHT I NEVER WOULD. BUT I'M HAVING ONE.
I KNEW FROM THAT DAY ON, THAT I'D NEVER MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN. I KNEW I HAD TO KEEP TRYING. BECAUSE STUPID AS IT SOUNDS, WE ALL GET AT LEAST ONE MORE HAPPY DAY.
SO I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES, LAUREL. WITH THE ROAD. WITH THE OTHER GUY.
AND WITH YOU.

OKAY THEN.
OKAY.
WE SHOULD GO.
YEAH. I GUESS SO.
YOU OKAY?
YEAH... FINE.
I JUST NOTICED... YOU'VE GOT A CUT.
IT'S NOTHING. DON'T WORRY..
IT'S NOT THE FIRST, AND I'M SURE IT WON'T BE THE LAST.
I KNOW A PLACE WE CAN SCORE SOME HOT DOGS.
YEAH?
YEAH.
COOL.
YOU REALLY HAVE TO ASK ME THAT QUESTION TWICE MORE?
YES.
WHEN?
YOU'LL SEE.
TO BE CONTINUED..

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Dear Joe and Gary, It's a truly beautiful thing you are creating here.

LEIGH HUNT
VIA E-MAIL

*Thank you!*

Love B5,love Crusade, love RS, love MN, love JMS(as a writer I mean), love and respect.

ANTHONY VERDIER
VIA E-MAIL

*You should see him tap dance.*

Hi to Renae and all you guys at top cow! I collect all sorts of comic books, ranging from Superman to Rising Stars, but in my opinion, midnight nation is definitely, undoubtedly, absolutely, truly, completely, undeniably, ... (umm, what else) the best of them all. I just can't wait for issue 7, and I wish you all well. See ya!

ARVIN CHAN
VIA E-MAIL

*There's "by far" ... but you can use that next time!*

I have followed Babylon 5 and Crusade through television, novel, and comic formats. I am an avid fan of Rising Stars and Midnight Nation, and eagerly await JMS' next project. But for the first time in years his words have truly disturbed and unsettled me. Several scenes in this issue had me on edge, but the scene that really got to me is when the Walkers were trying to talk Sarah into suicide. "You're never going to be as pretty as you were. The older you get, the less the chance that you will ever know love again." I fell in love a long time ago with one of my best friends, and she did not return the feeling. Try as I might I didn't get over it for years and years, and by then I had already passed up numerous chances with others. So I have had thoughts very like the ones the Walkers used. And yes, I have thought about taking my own life. JMS' understanding of human fears and self-doubt is obviously keen, and his brutal honesty is razor sharp. These days I don't need anyone to pull me back from the ledge. I'm doing fine. But this issue served as a reminder to me that everyone faces those demons of fear and loneliness from time to time, and most of us don't get to see them punched in the face by an invisible savior. Thanks for a powerful story.

J. DAVID CLARKE
VIA E-MAIL

*Yes, apparently there are a couple Walkers that have also taken up residence in the true world between...between my scale and my mirror. Sigh. (Ugh! I guess I was behind in my pathetic comment quota for the day. Now I'm WAY ahead!)*

Wow, Joe just keeps delivering! (Not that I expected any less..) I figured out fairly early that we were in for a modern Pilgrim's Progress (hmm, the Slough of Despond seems to pervade this series), but the twists of David Grey's Every man are so complex... He's a good cop, but not a good human being. (I'm put in mind of the letter column of a long-ago Green Arrow, where someone pointed out how sooo law enforcers and lawbreakers start becoming flip sides of the same coin.) His agonies over Sarah have not so much to do with her, but with him. He's still selfish, on a quest for her forgiveness. It's still about him. But what happens with the Walkers shocks him, and puts him in a different mode. Good. It's been a great ride, so far, and looks to continue in that mode!

JANE BECKMAN
VIA E-MAIL

*I bet it gets better, knowing Joe!*

Renae, Congratulations on another killer issue of Midnight Nation! As David and Laurel progress across this great nation of ours, and as David progresses further and further towards becoming a walker, JMS is displaying the realistic and in-depth characterization that has always earmarked his work. What I like most about Midnight Nation is the fact that, although all 12 issues are coming together to form an epic tapestry, each issue can also be read separately, as a self-contained story. In this issue, JMS clearly showed the pain and feelings of remorse that accompany any divorce or separation, as well as the love that remains. David's need to show Sarah that he cared, manifested by his ability to touch her and save her life, was a good example of all of these feelings, but it still doesn't come close to David's 10-word note to Sarah. In the space of 10 words, David spoke volumes about the nature of their relationship, along with its untimely end, and said some things that I think many divorcees would like to say, if only they could. About the only problem that I had with the issue was the fact that certain swear words were 'bleeped' out. For many books, I think that the 'cutesy-fying' of swear words is OK, but for a book that is targeted towards an older market, along with appearing in an issue that features an attempted suicide, at least 3 nude shots, and numerous suggestively unclothed shots, there is no need to do this. I kind of doubt that an occasional 'shit' or 'asshole' is going to offend anyone. However, other than that (well, other than that and the fact that there were no more pictures of Renae on the letters page), this was another JMS extravaganza. Keep 'em coming!

JOE NOVAK
VIA E-MAIL

*Umm...yeah. That was my fault. The "cutsey-fying" that is. I'm not sure who put the symbols in, but I neglected to notice and let it print that way. I still owe JMS a Guinness for that one... Sorry! Sigh. You see... it's just that my "virgin eyes" were trying to spa- FINE! I just missed it. STOP LAUGHING, PETER!!! I'll see what pictures I can dig up. They might be mine...they might not. Some people teased me about my pictures in some other letters columns so...the war begins.*

It was mentioned in the letters for Midnight Nation #5 that there is a Midnight Nation 1/2. I'm not a big comic book fan, but from what I've heard the local comic book stores don't get these "weird numbered issues" (their quote, not mine). So how can I get my hands on this issue? I'm really enjoying both Midnight Nation and Rising Stars and have even gotten my girlfriend into them! We are, of course, B5 fans who just keep movin' though Joe's adventures...

Thanks for any help you can provide.

CARL R. KNECHT
VIA E-MAIL

*Midnight Nation #1/2 is coming out through Wizard. You have to get a coupon from Wizard and send it in with your money! We usually reprint these "weird numbered issues" ourselves but not for a long time so if you want it now, get your order in to Wizard Magazine!!*

To the Joe's Comics Crew. Once again I find myself writing in to praise the truly great talent that is Joseph Michael Straczynski. First off let me say that as the series goes on I not only no longer hate the protagonists name, but am coming to like it. Okay you might be scratching your heads on that. Y'see my stepdad was named David Gray. He was an abusive asshole that made my life a living hell for a number of years. He also looks incredibly similar to the character David Grey. Hell, slap a trench on him and shave his mustache and you got a body double for a photo cover. This sick fuck turned my life into a nightmare. I recall many a time listening to White Zombie or Primus to drown out the sounds of his

abuse to the woman that gave birth to me. So it came as no real shock to me when I realized that subconsciously disliked your main lead in this intricate tale. His character growth however has made me come to like the guy. With the ending of #4 I was left feeling a bit more positive on life.

Seeing David face the unknown and find that it wasn't as bad as others had feared was a truly inspirational moment. With the latest issue #6, that I just now read this evening, I was gripped by his devotion to his ex-wife and his sacrifice in taking one last shot at saying, "I love you". This was also the issue where I finally clicked on the fact that this whole time the set up has been an elaborate YHWH Vs. Shaitan scenario. Whatever names they have I now know that David's guide is indeed working for God and the men are agents of the Devil. The final scene, with the note that David left being scattered in the wind and falling in a puddle hurt. Now we know that if David fails and becomes one of the walkers or gets killed by Rachel that his wife will never know how he really felt. It brought me close tears thinking about that. It's very rare that a comic book does that for me. Mr. Straczynski you have a wonderful gift and I am forever glad that you have had this opportunity to share it with so many others and me. Even if I never meet you face to face I want you to know that you have my thanks. All this from a character with a name that I hate...

LORD SAVAUNT VON HENDERICKS
VIA E-MAIL

*I read this letter a few times trying to figure out what to say in return but my "witty banter" seemed highly inappropriate. So I will just say, thank you for reading, thank you for the letter, and ...give your mother a hug for me.*

Dear Mr. Straczynski, Darn you, sir! How - could- you?! Argh! Erg! I read a lot of comics; 20-30 titles a month, depending on what actually prints and ships. I enjoy the graphical and episodic storytelling. When Morpheus took Death's hand (Gaiman's Sandman), I cried. In recent days, I haven't been seeing a lot of work that provokes such strong emotional reactions– it seems like many characters are portrayed a bit too shallowly to really become attached to them. A very few titles challenge this attitude of mine, and today yours joined the list. If I hadn't been at reading it at the office, I would have screamed with rage when you, you, you BRUTE! The wind blew the note out of the window. She's never going to get it, she's never going to hear the words it took David such harsh travails to learn how to say...Argh! Erg! I know I'm repeating myself, but I'm a little inarticulate right now. How -could- you?? Thank you for the wonderful, engaging, character-driven story you're giving us. I'm rooting for David now–it just doesn't seem fair that he could learn and grow so very much and still turn into a Walker! Surely he can earn his redemption by facing up to his own flaws that lead to his isolation, and overcoming them? But if he does turn, well, I hope he kicks the other Walker's butts! And now I have to go try to scrounge up 12 issues worth of back story for Rising Stars, when said title is completely non-existent at my comic shop 10 minutes after the shipment is unloaded, to see what you're doing with that. Argh.

JENNIFER L
VIA E-MAIL

*As you'll see if you've read the above letters, there's no need to kiddi-fy here. You may use any four-letter word you like if "darn you" doesn't seem to cut it. (Just for future reference.) Last issue seemed to have quite an effect on a lot of people (which pleases me greatly!) and we received a lot of letters about David's inability to REALLY communicate his feelings to his wife. It makes you think that maybe you should make a little phone call right now...just in case...hmh? Seize the day, my friends!*

Hi Renae, Having heard you emphasizing the talents of Michael Zulli it makes me wonder if this guy's art can really compare to Gary's. As there are always truckloads of praises for JMS's writing-skills, I felt Gary's deserved a little respect, as well. His drawings are by far the most remarkable artworks in business (aside from David Mack's, sorry ;-)). Compared to other, let's say "gifted" artist, I think his characters contain both, more realism and more expressiveness that force the consumer to develop a certain relationship with them. Well, only look at the layout of one single picture; mainstream comic-artists want to create action in every single spot, whereas Gary seems to target on the creation of a certain mood, of a specific intensity. Milan Kundera says in one of his books (ah, well some comic-fans do even read old-fashioned books ;-)) that "beauty" is not the general taste of the society or the decade it lives in, but is inherent in the asymmetrical, non-ordinary things; well, that's why I prefer David and Laurel over some big bad muscle-packed enforcer and his double-D (or is it even triple ? ;-)) super-heroine partner ( besides, how do they manage to fight with all this "equipment" ? ;-)) So, thanks Mr. Frank !

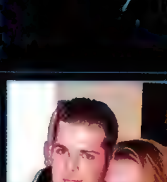
Well, that's it for the moment. We love You, Renae, keep goin!

THORSTEN KEMPE
GERMANY

*AWW! Thank you! I love you all too. Oh, I'll keep goin'...what else CAN I do? Don't you worry! Michael Zulli and Gary Frank are NOTHING alike art-wise. I think its unfair to COMPARE people with different styles. That's like putting Picasso and Rembrandt together and trying to compare. You'll keep coming back to "they're different", Apples and oranges. Michael Zulli has a darker, more raw style. Don't get me wrong! As I said, Gary is my hero and I'm a HUGE fan of his stuff! He's one of the few artists whose pages I take into my office and sit and pour over. His facial expressions are...well, you know that or you wouldn't be reading this! Gary's the best! Wait, my favorite "beauty" quote is that "beauty is perfection flirting with ugliness". If something is too perfect it becomes flavorless. Hmm...I think I'm going to start telling people that when I screw up...*

*Well, I will see you all next issue! Keep reading, keep writing! And enjoy the LOVELY pictures. :)*

Renae



*Renae Geerlings and Top Cow Employee, Tyler Holzerland.*

*Tyler is currently running fourth in Top Cow's competition for weirdest-longest surnames, behind Steigerwald, Mastromauro and Straczynski; but he beat out Geerlings and Silvestri. He is 20 years old, single, six feet tall, lives on a ranch, is good with horses but hates cleaning up after them, plays guitar in a rock band and pool very badly... AND he has no idea we're running this.*

*Romantic inquiries can be sent via psteigerwald@topcow.com, or you can simply accost him at a convention.*

*But apparently you're going to have to beat Renae off with a stick.*

*(At least he's not jail-bait)*

*(If he was, I'd be dating him)*

*Peter*

# the COW MOOS

NO. 17-A MAY 2001

## HOT! HOT! HOT!

**WHAT DO YOU WANT MOST IN THE UNIVERSE?**

**HOW ABOUT MONEY?**

**HOW ABOUT $10,000?**

THE UNIVERSE HOLDS ALL THE ANSWERS.

***AUGUST 2001***

(Can you wait 3 months now?)

## More Moos!

**WE SOLD OUT SO YOU CAN TRADE:** *Witchblade: The Deluxe Collected Edition* and *Rising Stars: Born in Fire* Trade Paperbacks have sold out! So what do we gonna do? Give 'em all new covers and print more! We're even updating the material in Witchblade, which will be henceforth be know as *Witchblade: Origins*.

**RARE BEEF:** Two new *Top Cow Select* covers are winging their way to a convention near you. *Witchblade #46* features a sketch cover by Keu Cha and Steve Firchow and *Tomb Raider #13* has an exclusive cover by Andy Park, Jonathan Sibal and Jonathan D. Smith. They will feature holofoil stamps, and a very small limited run will be virgin—no logos at all!!. These will go fast, so get to our booth early, because you can only get them directly from us!

**PARK IT HERE!:** Andy's BACK!! After a beautiful two issues of Tomb Raider by Billy Tan, a rested ass kickin' Andy Park is back on *Tomb Raider: the Series*! Issue #13 on stands ***NOW!***

**CHECK YOUR MAGAZINE:** Coming soon to a rack near you is the inaugural issue of *Tomb Raider: The MAGAZINE* and *The COW: Summer Edition 2001* chock full of fun.

## IN STORES NOW !!!

**MIDNIGHT NATION #7**
(W) J. Michael Straczynski
(P) Gary Frank (I) Jonathan Sibal
(C) Matt Milla

**WITCHBLADE #47**
(W) Paul Jenkins
(P&I) Michael Zulli
(C) Steve Firchow

**OBERGEIST #2**
(W) Dan Jolley
(P)Tony Harris (I) Ray Snyder
(C) Matt Hollingsworth

### Also On Sale Now:

**NO HONOR #3**
AVERY CRAIN GIAMPOR NELSON

**RISING STARS #14**
STRACZYNSKI IMMONEN ALQUIZA, KEMP

**TOMB RAIDER #13**
JURGENS PARK SIBAL SMITH

**WITCHBLADE #46**
JENKINS CHA D-TRON FIRCHOW

**Top Cow Classics in Black and White**
**WITCHBLADE #25**
Z. M. TURNER D TRON

### Coming Soon:

**BUTCHER KNIGHT #4**
HOLLAND TURNER FIRCHOW

**FATHOM: KILLIAN'S TIDE #2**
TURNER/D'NEY, CALDWELL GORDER STEIGERWALD

**THE COW: SUMMER SPECIAL**

# GOT A PROBLEM? *CALL US.*

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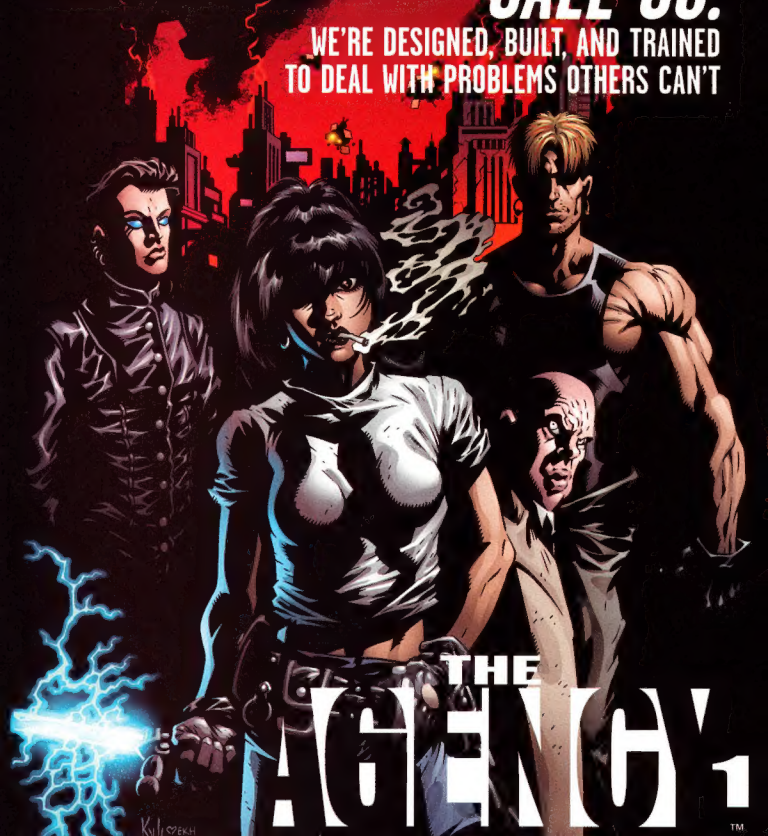
TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OTHERS CAN'T



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WITH COVERS BY KYLE HOTZ AND MARC SILVESTRI

TOP COW PRODUCTIONS, INC.

COMMENCING OPERATIONS IN JULY

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info@topcow.com

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SHE HAS SEEN COUNTLESS WONDERS,
SURVIVED FOR HUNDREDS OF CENTURIES,
SARA PEZZINI HAS FELT HER CARESS,
AND FOUGHT HER INFLUENCE.
HER FOES ARE MANY,
HER DESTINY LONG.
SHE IS THE WITCHBLADE,
SHE IS THE ENEMY OF THE DARKNESS
BUT WHO IS HER ENEMY?
WHAT ONCE WAS...
IS NO MORE.
ANOTHER GAUNTLET HAS BEEN THROWN.
AND ITS FIRE WILL BURN
THE UNIVERSE ENTIRE.
WITCHBLADE
#50
THE UNIVERSE IS AWAKENING.
JULY 2001
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info@topcow.com
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DARKNESS FALLS.

# The Darkness 40

WRITTEN BY PAUL JENKINS PENCILS BY DALE KEOWN

THE UNIVERSE IS AWAKENING.

JULY 2001

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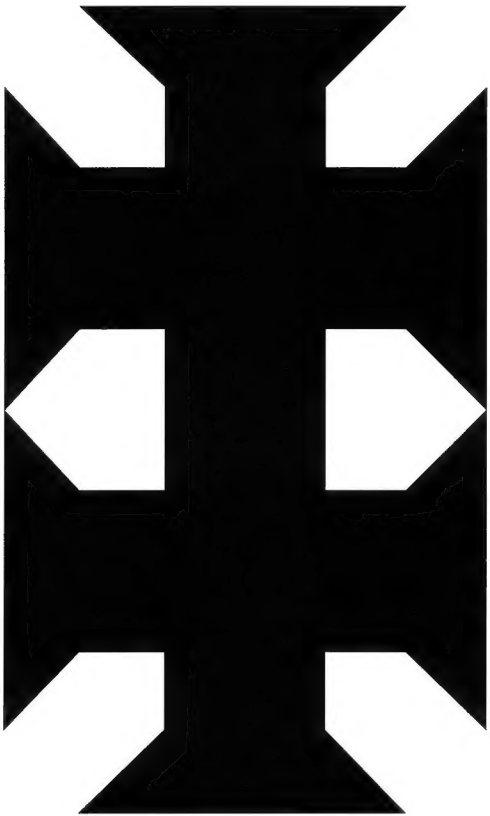

# WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

UNIVERSE ONE

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